

HA-1616
Union Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church
Aberdeen vicinity
Private

1918-19

The Union Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church is an early twentieth century vernacular country chapel with a central entry and bell tower, which was originally vertical board sided, but was covered with brick veneer in 1962. The simple auditorium plan has marbelized stained glass lancet windows in each elevation. The open belfry retains its wood exterior and has scroll sawn bracket and pendant decoration at the openings of the bell chamber.

The Chapel represents the continuation of a Black religious group in eastern Harford County which originated in the early 19th century. Its vernacular architecture is the probable result of the skills of congregation members who were the principal workmen in its construction.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Union Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON

Union United Methodist Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

700 Post Road

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☒ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Trustees of Union United Methodist Church Telephone #: (301) 272-9604

STREET & NUMBER

700 Post Road

272-0580

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen

☐ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

MD

21001

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Court House

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air,

STATE

MD

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT ☐ DETERIORATED
☐ GOOD ☐ RUINS
☐ FAIR ☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Union United Methodist Church is an early twentieth century vernacular country chapel with a central entry and bell tower located about 200 feet northwest of Post Road (Md. 132) about one-half mile northeast of Aberdeen.

The church is a rectangular frame building on a concrete and stone foundation. Red brick veneer added in 1962 covers the entire exterior except for the upper part of the bell tower which retains the original vertical wood siding. The bell tower projects from the main block, forming a foyer. Pointed arch lancet windows with marbelized stained glass flank the double entry doors which also have a pointed arch transom. Lancet windows also flank the bell tower and form four bays on the side elevations. The rear or northwest elevation has a group of three lancet windows.

A brick stairway to the entry appears to be of later date than the church itself. Flanking the stairs are windows lighting the raised basement, which is visible on three elevations. The bell tower has a circular louvred vent just above the brick veneer in all sides of the tower. The belfry is open with a simple balustrade and scroll-sawn brackets and pendants. The roof is a pyramid shape and is covered in modern composition roofing material.

The interior of the church is basically a simple auditorium plan with the foyer under the bell tower. The recessed rear wall with the three lancet windows backs the raised pulpit and choir platform. Much of the interior has been altered over the years. The floor, pews, and carpeting, as well as the communion rail and lecterns are of recent date. The tongue-and-groove dado and the pressed metal ceiling appear to be original, but have been heavily painted over. The basement level is used for classes and social gatherings and has been modernized in sections over a span of several years.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Local Black history

SPECIFIC DATES 1918-19

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Union Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church represents the continuation of a Black religious group in eastern Harford County which originated in the early nineteenth century. Its vernacular architecture is the probable result of the skills of congregation members who were the principal workmen in its construction, thus exemplifying the state of development of building skills in the Black community in this section of Maryland.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

Prior to 1849, the Black Methodist community in the area of Michaelsville worshipped in the gallery of a white church, the Garrison Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church. The Black congregation outgrew the gallery and concurrently felt the need for their own church. In 1849, the site of the new church was designated about two miles southeast of Perryman. Robert Brown, a church member, hauled stone for the foundation to the site and in 1850, Ephraim Brown and his brother Solomon, along with other workmen, built the first Union Chapel, a building measuring 28 x 40 x 16 feet. Other details of its appearance are unknown.

The church did not have ordained ministers for several years, but the names of the congregation's ministers have been recorded since 1852 and include both white and Black pastors.

By the 1880's, the congregation had again outgrown the chapel. In October 1888, a new new church, measuring 32 x 50 x 14 feet with a seating capacity of 300, was dedicated. The location of the second chapel is unclear, but the site included one acre of land bought specifically for the purpose. In 1894, a small portion of the congregation living in High Timber and other neighboring towns built their own church about five miles east of Perryman. This church, the Sydney Park Methodist Episcopal Church, was apparently built for the convenience of the congregation rather than as a result of religious differences.

In the early twentieth century, the sites of both churches were bought by the U.S. Government as part of the Aberdeen Proving Ground. The two groups reunited and bought the present site from a white undertaker, George Pennington, in 1917. The new grounds consisted of 14 acres and had three houses and a former blacksmith shop. One of the houses was used as the parsonage and services were held in it and later in the former smithy. In 1918, William B. Tildon

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

United Methodist Church Parsonage Mortgage Burning Celebration,
July 13, 1980 (commemorative pamphlet)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Janet Davis

ORGANIZATION

MHT/SHA Surveyor

DATE

February 23, 1981

STREET & NUMBER

21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

(301) 269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

MD 21401

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

ITEM 8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

was appointed the head of the building committee and work began on the present church. The first services were held in September, 1919.

The parsonage (HA-247) was demolished in 1973 and a new residence built on the site. A cemetery is located northwest of the church between the parsonage and the Conrail railroad line.

NOTES:

1. United Methodist Church Parsonage Mortgage Burning Celebration, July 13, 1980 (commemorative pamphlet), p. 5.





